

## Reavers on the Seas of Fate Session Summary – March 7, 2010

Our heroes have just infiltrated Staufen Mansion, a castle owned by the Staufen family. They intend to prepare it for an attack by the pirate crew of Captain Clap's ship, the *Wandering Dagger*. Our heroes are:

- Wogan, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick)
- Tommy Blacktoes, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (Kevin, sadly absent)
- Sindawe H'kilata Narr, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris)
- Ref "Serpent" Jorensen, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his giant constrictor snake, Saluthra (Paul)

### *Before Dinner*

In the guest room, the characters take a moment to discuss their situation before heading off to dinner with the Staufens. *Wogan* believes the weather has been fair for sailing. Assuming no imperial entanglements, *Captain Clap* should be here in a couple days, which *Wogan* describes as "Just enough time for all of us to be turned into vampires!" The rest of the party is not reassured by this statement. While *Serpent* and *Sindawe* wring the rain out of their clothes and fancy up, *Wogan* searches the room for spyholes. After *Wogan* reports no spyholes, *Sindawe* asks, "What about gloryholes?"

Eventually a toothless old crone of a servant comes to collect the party and escort them to dinner. *Tommy Blacktoes* stays behind due to severe wyvern poisoning. As the party walks, *Serpent* regales the servant with tales of his frozen homeland ("In the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, rich lords import pink flamingos and stick them on their lawn, where they quickly become frozen solid by the weather. We totally started that craze."), and *Wogan* examines the family paintings along the halls. He notes one particular painting of Lord Valdric Staufen and Lady Elzbeth Staufen holding hands. In the background of the painting, there is a mirror, and in the mirror he can see a vague shadowy threatening form. *Sindawe* takes an interest in the layout of the building. "Is this the kitchen?" he asks, throwing open a door. "Oh yes, yes," cries the aged servant, *Edith*, "Come along!" she totters off surprisingly quickly. To his surprise, along with six servants in the kitchen, *Sindawe* sees something disturbing at the far end of the kitchen

raiding the pantry and stuffing its face. It is a massive filthy naked humanoid, its gender concealed by cascading rolls of fat, holding a live chicken in one hand. As Sindawe quietly describes this creature to the party, Serpent asks, "Was it Scott Kurtz?"

### *The Staufen Family Banquet*

As the party enters the dining room, they see the Staufen family seated at a large banquet table. "Welcome to Staufen Manor," announces *Lord Valdric*. "Any friends of Helmut's are friends of ours. Please, come take a seat by me." Sindawe immediately proceeds to sit on Valdric's right hand side, by *Erich Staufen*, and Wogan sits between Lord Valdric and *Lady Elzbeth*. Serpent sits further down the table between Erich and *Rosalin Staufen*. No one sits next to the cadaverous-looking *Amalinda Staufen* or the dour-looking *Jack Staufen*.

Serpent thanks Lord Valdric for his warm welcome, and then Sindawe begins filling the Lord in on the condition of his son *Helmut*. Of course none of the party has actually met Helmut so this is a massive pack of lies. In the meantime servants begin bringing in large amounts of fine food, and the party begins to talk with some of the family members.

Serpent tries to chat with Rosalin. She seems to be generally disagreeable, and often mutters catty comments under her breath about the other family members. Serpent makes a show of appreciating her comments and making some of his own. After Serpent sees her shy away from a servant, they have a conversation about how dirty and inferior common folk are. Serpent doesn't mention that the rainshower he walked through on the way to the castle was the first bath he's had in a month. She begins to interrogate Serpent on his family background and Serpent launches into the tale of his birth, being left on his father's doorstep by a frozen witch of the north, a follower of Baba Yaga. She responds with a look of polite horror.

Sindawe talks to Lord Valdric, asking him questions about the family and Helmut's childhood. "I noticed you had some crime problems. I saw some of the crucified criminals outside."

"Very perceptive." says Lord Valdric. "Out here in the islands we have to be very sure to make sure crime is punished." Erich and Valdric both begin describing their

efforts to keep crime under control on the island. The crime of getting mud on a lord's boots seems to particularly vex Lord Valdric.

At the far end of the table Amalinda makes a big show of finding the food to be detestable. Amalinda looks like a starved Auschwitz victim, but apparently has no intention of eating this food.

Sindawe quietly asks Erich, "Is there something wrong with her?"

Erich responds "Nothing that a good deep dicking wouldn't solve." Erich, Valdric, and Sindawe have a good chuckle.

Wogan asks Lady Elzbeth about any possible threats that may be affecting the island, but Lady Elzbeth seems alarmed at being spoken to. She answers briefly and nervously and then turns away. Lord Valdric cuts in to tell Wogan that there are no major threats to the island. He continues by telling Wogan that this leaves him plenty of time to "spend with his girls."

Wogan asks, "You mean your daughters?"

"No, I mean the OTHER kind of girls." Valdric winks, "You ever been with multiple women at once? I highly recommend it!"

Sindawe tries to engage with Jack Staufen a bit. He asks "So how about this weather? Does it ever stop raining?"

"Not often. The rain here is like my brother Erich's wit."

Sindawe asks, "All wet?" Jack laughs but Erich seems unamused.

Serpent finally finishes his story and asks Rosalin, "So what about your family? What is the history of the Staufen?" Rosalin gives Serpent some rigamarole about the greatness of the Staufen family but no real details. "What about that statue we saw in town?"

"That's Lord *Amros Staufen*. He came to this island and brought proper Chelish civilization to the savages. Under our leadership, the island has become quite a profitable tax base as well."

"Really," Serpent asks, "and how is this money generated?"

"The peasants make the money, doing whatever it is that common people do." She seems totally clueless.

Serpent turns to Erich and gets a little more detail about the trade and farming on the island. Sindawe mentions the halfling alchemist in town and Lord Valdric says, “Yes, it's a sign of our Chelish civilization that we even allow the Little People to live among us.”

Sindawe counters, “Yeah, but don't their tiny little hands and feet freak you out?”

Rosalin remarks to Serpent, “Yes, don't you hate those little subhumans? They're so small because their souls are also tiny.”

“Really?” Serpent asks. “Then my soul must be HUGE!” He flexes.

Lord Valdric excuse himself to “Take care of some business.” Rosalin remarks, “I'm surprised he can walk.”

“Yeah,” says Serpent. “With all the tail he gets.”

Sindawe asks Erich about other family members. It turns out that siblings *Kris* and *Leonor* couldn't make it to the dinner. “They are not as gregarious as we are. Undoubtedly they are wasting their days away in their fashion.” Erich and Sindawe go on to discuss Helmut. Erich offers that Helmut takes no pride in his family heritage and that his bravery is matched only by his stupidity.

At some point Lady Elzbeth excuses herself and the dinner starts to break up. Sindawe asks Jack what there is to do on the island, and Jack offers to take Sindawe out for an outing the following day.

On the way out, Wogan checks out the kitchen to see if he can get something for Tommy. He is quite repulsed by the grotesque monster still at the back of the kitchen. The servants offer to bring something to the guest room for Tommy and shoo Wogan out.

After dinner, Serpent begins wandering the castle, looking around at all the doors and asking questions of the poor servant, Johan, who keeps following him around trying to convince him to go back to the guest suite. The servant refuses to let Serpent go into the lord's observatory, and continuously warns him about the castle's soldiers. “Don't worry,” Serpent says, “Soldiers love me.” In this manner he explores the second floor and then the first floor, trailing the servant Johan behind him.

## *Sindawe's Secret Rendezvous*

Sindawe makes a special effort to meet Amalinda and shake her hand. He asks if she would be amenable to meeting him in the library to talk, and it turns out she is. “How did you know the library is my favorite place?” Sindawe goes off to talk to her. In the library Sindawe looks around and begins asking about the books. Amalinda begins describing the books she's read and her experiences of them. At some point Sindawe hears a noise coming from above. He looks up at a balcony inside the library overhead. “Is someone up there?”

Amalinda answers, “It's probably just one of my siblings. They're very jealous of me.”

“So,” Sindawe asks, “Why is Erich so hard on the locals? Why all the crucifixions?”

“Oh, Erich just likes to think he's important. I'm sure the island would go on just fine without him.”

“Well, what's a scofflaw anyway? I wouldn't want to break any scofflaws accidentally.”

“Oh, a scofflaw is just what Erich likes to call someone who breaks the law.”

Suddenly Serpent barges in on Sindawe and Amalinda, trailing the hapless Johan behind him.

Sindawe tries to look innocent. “We're talking about books.” says Sindawe.

“That sounds incredibly boring.” says Serpent. “Where does that door go?” The servant doesn't answer fast enough, so Serpent opens the door himself and goes into the adjoining hallway. There, two castle soldiers are stationed, staring down Serpent. The soldiers appear to be albino orcs with chalk-white skin and glowing red eyes. Serpent turns to Johan. “Did you know your castle is being invaded by orcs?”

“Those are the soldiers,” Johan says nervously. “We need to go now, sir.”

“These don't look like soldiers, they look like monsters to me.” The orcs growl and walk closer to Serpent. Serpent finally lets Johan lead him back to the guest suite.

Sindawe and Amalinda talk about Serpent after he leaves. Amalinda asks, “Did you know he's some kind of witch baby?”

“Yeah,” says Sindawe. “We met some freaky witch woman in one port who he thought might be his mother.”

“Okay. Enough about that. Let's talk about me.” They talk about her for a while. Finally, she offers to show Sindawe the catacombs.

“Sure.” Sindawe shrugs. “Let's see the catacombs.” Sindawe and Amalinda sneak off towards the secret entrance to the catacombs.

### *Serpent and Wogan Go Quantity Surveying*

Back in the guest suite, Serpent greets Wogan and Tommy and takes some paper and draws a map of everything he's seen in the castle. After finishing the map, he says “OK, let's go exploring.”

Tommy sits up. “Yeah, let's go exploorrin” then falls back down.

“I think you need more time to recover.” says Wogan.

Wogan and Serpent head north to search the back kitchen stairwell. They find nothing but some old fried potatoes under the stairs. Heading up to the kitchen they find it empty of servants but the disgusting monster is still there, and still eating everything it can get its chubby hands on. Wogan and Serpent observe it for a few moments, then it suddenly turns and vomits a spray of acid across the room, hitting them both.

“OK,” Serpent says tightly. “Do we kill it?”

“I don't really think we should,” says Wogan, “I think we should keep our cover for now.” Wogan uses a healing burst to heal them both. This also heals some of the monster's weeping sores.

The creature turns toward Wogan, grabs a battleaxe off the table, and shoves a leg of mutton into its mouth. It says something menacing that is mostly muffled by mutton. Wogan and Serpent decide to retreat posthaste back down the stairs and back to the guest suite.

### *Sex in the Catacombs*

Amalinda leads Sindawe across the dark, rainy courtyard to the Asmodean chapel. The albino orcish soldiers standing in the lee of the south wall stare at the pair from under their cloaks as they pass.

“You do realize your soldiers are freakish and have glowing red eyes, right?”

“Of course, silly!” she answers.

In the chapel, Amalinda shows Sindawe where a secret door is in the floor under a carving of Belial. Down below, there is a haphazardly arranged catacomb full of ancient corpses. Amalinda lights a candle and begins prattling on about her family for a while until Sindawe kisses her to shut her up.

In a short while, Sindawe and Amalinda are naked and screwing on the floor of the tomb. The candle goes out and things continue in the darkness until Sindawe gets a bit freaked out by random noises and lights a sunrod. It is only then that he realizes he couldn't tell the difference between the dessicated corpses and Amalinda's skeletal frame in the darkness, and he has morbid thoughts about suddenly finding himself in a three-way with Amalinda and one of the dead Staufen relatives. He doesn't let this stop him, though.

### *Serpent Goes Exploring Again*

Serpent sneaks out of the guest suite yet again and goes up through the back stairs to the kitchen. He finds the fat food monster asleep in the kitchen, sleep-gnawing on the leg of mutton. Serpent sneaks past the sleeping mound of blubber and down the hallway to the observatory. The observatory consists of a long balcony with paintings of the island and a large window that looks out into the rainy night. While observing the paintings Serpent suddenly feels a burning pain on his back. He wheels to find that a bat-winged flying baby has just spit acid on him. Serpent runs out of the observatory and back into the hall.

Serpent heals himself and sneaks to the stairs and up to the third level. On the third floor Serpent sneaks around in the hallways until a door opens and out storms a goat-headed devil wielding a crescent-shaped polearm. Serpent sprints back to the nearest stairwell and throws himself down it, getting several bad bruises in the process. The devil

is unwilling to throw himself down the stairs to follow him, so Serpent makes his getaway, sneaks past the blubber monster again, and makes it back to the guest suite.

Eventually Sindawe returns from his midnight tryst and the characters all share what they learned. Sindawe mentions that he saw an area in the crypt that might lead to a larger underground area. Sindawe teases Wogan, saying that since Serpent has been chatting up one of the family's daughters and Sindawe has seduced another, it's Wogan's job to seduce the remaining daughter, Leonor. "Let's just hope that thing in the kitchen is not Leonor!"

### The Tour of the Island

The next morning a fawning google-eyed servant named *Olbrecht* brings the party breakfast and tells them that the Staufen family wants to take the party on a tour of the island. Sindawe interrogates the servant about the orc soldiers but he doesn't get much information. Serpent asks about the chapel and learns that the head priest is named *Father Bergen*. Bergen has been the head priest for years. Serpent learns the proper hand signal to praise Asmodeus.

Wogan casts a Restoration on Tommy to help him recover from the wyvern poison. He's looking a bit better but is still recovering. When Jack comes to get the characters, dressed in riding leathers and with a whip, they make the decision to leave Tommy behind to recover.

Making their way to the horses, the party encounters Erich Staufen dressed in full armor.

"Are you expecting monsters?" Serpent asks.

"No, but you never know when the populace will need pacifying." Erich answers.

"Ah," Serpent observes.

Wogan observes his horse warily. "I can't ride." he says.

"Is that another one of your religious rules?" asks Serpent.

"No," answers Wogan, "I just don't know how."

A couple guards come to accompany the expedition, but Erich waves them away. "Let's take the soldiers today. They need the exercise." Three of the white-skinned orcs join the group.



Serpent says “Your servants are very unusual. I've never seen their like.”

Erich answers, “Yes, they're great aren't they? They're a blessing from Asmodeus.”

Sindawe inquires further. “How did you get them?” Erich tells the party that Father Bergen gave them to the family.

Wogan presses his luck. “How many of them are there?”

“Oh, more than a dozen.”

Sindawe inquires, “What are they exactly? They don't seem like normal orcs.”

“I believe they were orcs, but changed by some kind of devilish rituals.”

Wogan notices that the devil-orcs don't seem to like the direct light too much.

“So where should we go?” says Erich.

Wogan suggests “How about the giant spider warrens?”

“Excellent. The grey woods it is.”

Soon the party reaches the grey woods and ventures into them. They meet a few trappers selling dire rats for food. Later the party hears panicked screams coming from ahead.

Serpent says “Let's go see what's going on!”

### *Combat!*

Rushing into the clearing, the party comes across a hunter who has just been webbed into immobility by a spider the size of a horse.

Erich charges the spider and smites it with his bastard sword. The spider throws a web at Erich but doesn't slow him down. In the meantime the other characters move forward slowly, Serpent casts a shillelagh spell on his staff and Wogan starts to summon a riding dog with his wand. Erich stabs the spider again, and Sindawe moves up to assist but misses. The spider fails to harm Erich. Wogan's summoned dog bites the spider once, then Erich finishes it off.

### *The Inevitable Betrayal!*

Sindawe relaxes, thinking the fight is over, when Serpent suddenly leaps to the ground and beats one of the orcs to death with his shillelagh before it can react. His snake *Saluthra* grabs one of the other orcs and begins to squeeze. Wogan casts Hold Person on Jack Staufen but Jack is strangely unaffected (as if he's not truly human). Erich yells "Treachery!" and attacks Sindawe, but Sindawe dodges. Sindawe attacks back and hits Erich in the chest.

The grappled orc soldier manages to create a darkness effect from his eyes and the other remaining orc soldier begins delivering massive blows to Serpent with its greatsword. Serpent retaliates with a series of shillelagh blows and eventually takes the orc down, but not before suffering several serious wounds.

Jack simply flees from the combat as fast as his horse will take him. Wogan fires his pistol at the retreating Jack but misses, and Jack gets away. Wogan is a very poor rider and has no intention of chasing the fleeing man, so he heads over to offer some healing to Serpent.

Erich continues to swing at Sindawe over and over but he can't hit the fast-moving monk. Erich's horse, however, delivers a few blows. Sindawe takes out an alchemist's fire and throws it, but it gets snagged in a web and doesn't go off. Sindawe then tries throwing a vial of acid, but although the acid hits Erich it does not affect him at all.

The remaining orc soldier frees himself from Saluthra's grasp and runs to block the path to Erich, but Serpent strikes the soldier and takes him down. Sindawe, frustrated by Erich's armor, punches out Erich's horse, sending it crashing down. Serpent runs up in time to finish off Erich with one last staff blow.

The party finally frees the hunter who was in the web. "Thank you!" he says, "I'll be going now. I didn't see ANYTHING!" The party lets him go, and they pack Erich's body up onto one of the horses.

### *Jack Is Surprisingly Helpful*

As the party rides out of the forest on horseback, they catch up with Jack, who is now on foot. Apparently as Jack tried to ride out of the forest, he ran into a dire badger which killed his horse and he had to continue on foot.

The party rides up and surrounds Jack with their horses, calling out for him to surrender. Jack stops and calls out “What do you want?”

Serpent says, “We want to know what's going on in that castle.”

Wogan says “Yeah, you're not human.”

Jack shrugs, “That's the blessing of Asmodeus. The new priest, Bergen, had us do a bunch of rituals and now we're bigger, stronger, and faster.”

Sindawe asks, “And that's when you all went crazy and started getting weird?”

“What do you mean?”

“Your brother Erich tortures the locals for fun”

“Oh no, that's me. I torture people, I just love it.”

Jack's frank admission takes the party aback for a moment and they consider killing him immediately.

Sindawe tries again, “OK, well, Erich likes to crucify people. And your other family members seem to all have their demented quirks as well.” Sindawe takes some time to explain why the family seems cursed and Jack seems to get it.

“Uh yeah, hey, maybe you're right. People have been acting weird. That priest must have tricked us. Let's go kill him!”

Sindawe nods, “All in good time. What is that thing in the kitchen?”

Jack answers, “That's my sister Leonor.” Wogan shudders.

“Has she always looked like that?”

“She was always big but now she does nothing but eat. She's even eaten some of the servants.”

Sindawe interrogates him more about the family. Leonor eats servants, Valdric used to be a fighter. Jack doesn't pay much attention to the women, but Amalinda may know some magic. His mother Elzbeth is the only one in the family that didn't undertake

the rituals, and she has become withdrawn lately (since the rest of her family became demented freaks).

Sindawe spins a story on the fly and tells Jack that the party was hired by Helmut Staufen, and that their mission is to assassinate the lord of the Staufen Manor. Jack seems absolutely fine with the idea of the party killing his father and his siblings. "Erich is already dead, if you kill my father, then I can become the Lord! And I can marry my mother!" Jack tells Sindawe that he can have Amalinda as long as the party leaves Jack's mother to him. The party finds this disgusting but let him have his little fantasy. After all, they plan on killing Jack anyway before this is all over.

The party talks it over and decides to trust Jack. He's insane and evil, but he seems to honestly want to kill Father Bergen and most of his family.

Interrogating Jack further, the party finds out that the castle is called a mansion because of Chelaxian law, which doesn't allow a Lord of Staufen's rank to own a "castle". So instead they built a fortified manor that would certainly qualify as a castle in most people's minds. Sindawe asks about the catacombs and it turns out the priest Bergen did the ritual down there. Father Bergen summons weird stuff all the time, including the flying baby thing and a few goat-head devils. Father Bergen also supplies girls for Valdric.

The party takes some effort to make it look like Erich was killed by spiders, impaling his badly-bludgeoned corpse on the spider's fangs. To complete the illusion, they stick some of the orc soldiers in webs in the forest.

The session ends with the party riding back to the castle with Erich's body, and a cooperative Jack.